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APPROVAL OF UNDP ASSISTANCE TO A PROJECT OF
BANGLADESH

IPF:(1992-96) $ 163 172 000

(BGD/93/003) - Utilization of Agro-Ecological Zone Database and Installation of Geographical Information System for Agricultural Development

Date of approval by the AC:[1/]	21 April 1993
Expected duration:	Four and one-half years
Proposed executing agency:	Government in association with FAO
Proposed UNDP contribution:	$1 817 600 Source of funds: IPF
Total UNDP budget:	$1 817 600

Project background

Under the UNDP/FAO project (BGD/81/023) Soil Resource Development Institute, a national Agro-Ecological Zones (AEZ) land resource database system was successfully developed at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) from 1981-1987. During this period, BARC staff were trained in the operation of the system. As an output of this project 29 Agro ecological Zones were defined (with an average area of 4,965 sq. km); and these are being used as units for developing extension recommendation and research priorities.

It has since been discovered that information available is being under-utilized for the following reasons: (i) lack of training of potential users outside BARC; (ii) need to update data; (iii) lack of socio-economic parameters; and (iv) the inability to input and process geographical data and present output in a spatial form. More knowledge and technical capability in the area of land utilization is needed as a basis for sound location specific, agricultural development planning, and decision-making covering the diversities within each agro-ecological zone.

The present project is included in the Fifth Country Programme as well as in the list of projects for implementation under the Government's Fourth Five-Year Plan. It serves as a vital component of the Government's priority accelerated Cereals Production (ACP) Programme in the agriculture sector. The project will be of direct support to (BGD/89/039) Assisting Transformation to Irrigated Agriculture, (BGD/89/045) TCTTI, (BGD/87/025) Horticulture Research and Development as well as IDA/ODA Agricultural Support Services Project.

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[1/] This Fact Sheet reflects the status of the project/revision at the time it was approved by the Action Committee; modifications to the project/revision may have occurred subsequently.

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Description of project

The project aims at enabling physical data about soils, climate and plant properties to be used at the Thana (Sub-district with an average area of 295 sq. km, and population of 215,000) level. To this end the socio economic data will be added to the database and systems of dissemination of the information and knowledge will be installed at the Thana level where it can be of direct benefit to farmers. The system brings together the data required from each sector and integrates it at farming system level for which consultancy inputs are provided. Systems for feedback of information from farmers and the rural community will form a part of the data network. The information and the knowledge will be held in computer systems which will be, on pilot scale, made available at Thana level where those involved more directly with advising farmers can access the information and provide feedback to its regular updating.

Introduction of the GIS and the necessary expertise developed will facilitate the preparation of area specific agricultural production plans at sectoral, sub-sectoral and Thana levels; identification of area specific crop diversification possibilities; strategic planning of research priorities to alleviate agro-ecological and socio-economic constraints to agricultural production and crop diversification identified through AEZ technology, the development of efficient and environmentally sound technology packages for agricultural resources management; strategic and quick response action plans under disaster preparedness; and simulation of possible future values and scenarios for planning sustainable and environmentally sound agricultural development. These, in turn, will contribute to higher production and farm income on a unit area basis, improved nutrition and enhanced employment opportunities for the rural poor.

Inputs

UNDP will provide international experts in GIS/Computer information systems 36 work-months, Agro-climatology six work-months; system specialist six work-months; GIS specialist two work-months; 132 work-months of national expertise including a land resource specialist, a socio-economist, a systems analyst/programmer and a farming systems specialist; a subcontract for a private sector computer/digitizer; in-country and overseas training; technical equipment; and miscellaneous costs.

Financial data

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Personnel	849 900
Subcontract	30 000
Training	349 700
Equipment	565 600
Miscellaneous	22 400
Total	1 817 600

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